

A SONG AND A SOLACE

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A SERMON
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*“Thou hast granted me life and favour, and thy visitation hath preserved my spirit.
And these things hast thou hid in thine heart: I know that this is with thee.”
Job 10:12-13*

BEFORE I speak upon these two verses, I will read the four which precede them, that you may note the connection in which they are found. Job is in great trouble, in sore distress of soul, his heart is very heavy, and his unfriendly friends are casting salt into his wounds instead of trying to heal them. In his distress he turns to his God, and appeals to Him in this fashion (beginning at the eighth verse), “Thine hands have made me and fashioned me together round about; yet thou dost destroy me. Remember, I beseech thee, that thou hast made me as the clay; and wilt thou bring me into dust again? Hast thou not poured me out as milk, and curdled me like cheese? Thou hast clothed me with skin and flesh, and hast fenced me with bones and sinews.” Then follows our text: “Thou hast granted me life and favour, and thy visitation hath preserved my spirit. And these things hast thou hid in thine heart: I know that this is with thee.”

You see that Job is appealing to the pity of God, and this is the form of his argument, “Thou art my Creator, be my Preserver. Thou hast made me, do not break me. Thou art dealing very hardly with me, I am almost destroyed beneath the pressure of Thy hand, yet remember that I am Thine own creature. Weak and frail as I am, I am the creation of Thy hand, therefore, despise not Thine own work. Whatever I am, with the exception of my sin, Thou hast made me what I am, 'tis Thou who hast brought me into my present condition, consider, then, O God, what a poor, frail thing I am, and stay Thy hand, and do not utterly crush my spirit.”

This is a wise prayer, a right and proper argument for a creature to use with the Creator, and when Job goes further still, and in the language of our text, addresses God not only as his Creator, but as his Benefactor, and mentions the great blessings that he had received from God, his argument still holds good, “Do not, Lord, change Thy method of dealing with me, Thou hast given me life, Thou hast shown me special favor, Thou hast hitherto preserved me, cast me not away from Thy presence, dismiss me not from Thy service, let not Thy tender mercies fail, but do unto me now and in days to come according as Thou hast done unto me in the days that are past.”

In speaking about these two verses, I am going to use them in two senses, the first in one sense and the second in another, but both and each of them in its own true meaning, so far as I understand it. First, here is *a song for bright days*, “Thou hast granted me life and favour, and thy visitation hath preserved my spirit.” Secondly, here is *a solace for dark nights*, “And these things hast thou hid in thine heart: I know that this is with thee.”

I. First then, let us use the former part of our text as A SONG FOR BRIGHT DAYS, “Thou hast granted me life and favour, and thy visitation has preserved my spirit.”

Whatever we have received that is good, has come to us from God as a matter of pure favor, certainly we have deserved nothing at His hands but displeasure, and everything short of death and hell is a mercy, and a thing for which to magnify the goodness of God. In this first portion of our text, there is a mention of three blessings that must never be forgotten. The great charter of God's bounty includes

three notable things which He has granted to us—life, favor, and His visitation which has preserved our spirit.

Now then, you joyful ones, unite with me while we first *bless God for granting us life*. To a Christian man, life is a blessing, in itself considered alone it is a blessing, but to the ungodly man it may turn out to be a curse, for it would have been better for that man if he had never been born. But to a godly man like Job, it is a great mercy even to have an existence. Blessed be the Lord who brought us into the world, and gave breath to these lungs, and the flowing life to these veins. Blessed be God for having made us.

Sometimes, as I gaze upon the world in springtime or in the summer, it appears to me that it is a great happiness to all nature to simply exist. Look at the lovely lily as it stands quite still, and never speaks, it seems in silence to praise God by its beauty. But a Christian should go beyond a mere flower; he ought to feel that it is a great favor to be made by God. The man who knows that his eternal future is secured by the unfailing grace of God may forever praise the Lord who has given him life.

I find that in the Hebrew, this word “life” is in the plural, “Thou hast granted me *lives*,” and blessed be God, we who believe in Jesus have not only this natural life, which we share in common with all men, but the Holy Spirit has begotten in the hearts of believers a new life infinitely higher than mere natural life, a life which makes us akin to Christ, joint heirs with Him of the eternal inheritance which He is keeping for us in heaven. A Christian man is lifted into quite another sphere of action, he is no longer in the carnal but in the spiritual realm, and therefore he understands things that are hidden from carnal eyes, and he lives in the midst of a world into which the unregenerate cannot possibly come.

An unconverted man cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven, he cannot even see it until he is born again, regenerated by the Holy Spirit, but once he is born again, he can bless God for giving him a second life infinitely better than the first one. Our well-being is a far higher thing than simply our being, the new creation is vastly superior to the first creation, good as that was, and the life of God in the soul is infinitely above the mere ordinary life of man.

Let us praise God then, for life, and especially for this higher life if it is ours. What a joy it is to live in this respect! You know that when a person is very sick and ill, and can scarcely turn in bed or lift a hand, when every sense is deprived of enjoyment, and every vein or nerve becomes a road for the hot feet of pain to travel over, then life is hardly to be called life, but when God graciously raises us up from sickness, we ought to bless Him for giving us life again, prolonged, restored, enjoyable life, and when the heart itself is sick, when the spirit flags, and the soul is ready to burst with inward grief, then the spiritual life seems scarcely to be life, but when, through the mercy of God, the Holy Spirit comes to us, and applies the pardoning blood of Jesus to our heart and conscience, and whispers peace to our troubled spirit, so that we can read our title clear to mansions in the skies, then our spiritual life is life indeed, we run, we leap, we fly, we would scarcely exchange for the bliss of angels the joy which the spiritual life brings to us at such times, and we bless and magnify the Lord who has granted us this higher life, this life so blessed, so superlatively blessed that, even here below, it makes us anticipate and realize some of the glory of heaven itself.

Are you, my brother, my sister, enjoying these lives? Do you feel that it is your privilege to be one with Christ, and to live because He lives, and do you really know that you have received this wondrous blessing? Oh, then, sing unto the Lord as long as you live, for it is the living, even the living in Zion who shall praise Him as we do this day! Let this be one of your songs in this bright day of your happy experience, let the joy of your heart ring it out in the words of our text, “Thou hast granted me life.”

Next, we have to *praise God for granting us favor*. I should be quite unable to tell you to the full all that is wrapped up in that word “favor.” Favor from God! It is a great word in the original, a word big with meaning, for it means the love of God. What the expression “the love of God” fully means, we cannot tell, for Charles Wesley truly wrote—

“God only knows the love of God.”

God loves immeasurably. The force and extent of true love never can be calculated, it is a passion that cannot be measured by degrees as the temperature can be recorded on the thermometer, it is something that exceeds and overflows all measurement, for a man gives all his heart when he truly loves. So is it with God, He sets no bound to His love. When He loves a man, the great infinity of His being flows out towards His chosen.

How much God loves you, my brother, my sister, if you are indeed one of His elect and redeemed people, it would not be possible even for an angel to calculate. Bernard of Clairvaux wrote—

*“The love of Jesus—what it is,
None but His loved ones know;”—*

but I correct the poet, for even His loved ones cannot know it, except in that sense which Paul intended when he wrote to the Ephesians, “that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God.”

We might rightly paraphrase Job’s words and say, “Thou hast granted me life and love.” Oh, what wondrous words to put together, life and love! Life without God’s love is death, but put God’s love with it, and then what a song we ought to send up to His throne if we feel that He has given us both spiritual life and infinite love.

The word “favor,” however, means not only love, but as we ordinarily use it, it means some special form of grace and goodness. I know that there are some people who never will admit that God favors anyone, or that He has any special love toward some more than toward others. They do not like that hymn which Dr. Watts wrote, I heard one alter the verse—

*“Let those refuse to sing
That never knew our God;
But favorites of the heavenly King
May speak their joys abroad.”*

The gentleman did not like the word “favorites,” so he gave out the line—

“But subjects of the heavenly King.”

I let him sing it in that fashion, for I thought that very likely he was only a subject, but I sang the line correctly, because I knew that I was one of the King’s favorites, and I was resolved to rejoice in that fact. So I am at this moment, for I know that I have received special favor from God, and that there are some who have not received such favor and mercy.

If, at this hour, any one of you is a child of God, it is because God has done more for you than He has done for others. If there is a difference between you and others, somebody made that difference, and whoever made it ought to be honored and praised for it. Did you make it yourself? Shall I put the crown on your head? Why, if you are right hearted, you will cry, “Nay, nay, it is God who has made me to differ from others, it is His grace which has been given to me, to bring me out of the darkness in which others have been left.” So, whatever others may think or say, we, at any rate, believe in that special form of grace which may be called favor, “Thou hast granted me life and favor.”

The Lord has given peculiar favor unto His own chosen people, and this makes them sing a song that rises above all the others, “He hath not dealt so with any nation.” “Let the redeemed of the LORD say so, whom he hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy.” Let them praise the Lord with thanksgiving evermore, and if you, dear friends, belong to that privileged company, praise ye the Lord.

By the word “favor” is also meant grace in all the shapes which it assumes, so Job’s words might be rendered, “Thou hast granted me life and grace.” Come, my brothers and sisters, if you can say this, just

think over all that it means. “Thou hast granted me the grace and favor of thine electing love and of thy redeeming love, the grace of effectual calling, the grace of regeneration, the grace of justification, the grace of adoption, the grace of perseverance until this day, the grace of sanctification,” (for all this is grace), “Thou hast given it, thou hast granted it of thy free favor, and granted it to me.”

“I do not know whether God has granted this grace to me,” says one. Well, my dear brother, you cannot sing while you doubt this, but if through faith in Jesus, you know that God has given you life and grace, sing away, sing despite all that might stop you, for this is a mercy which should forever monopolize the music of everyone who has been thus favored of God, “Thou hast granted me life and grace.”

I do not know what any other person in this place might say, but if no one else said it, I should be compelled, in the courts of the Lord’s house, and in the midst of His people, to say, “I bless His name for giving me life and grace, I am altogether undeserving of such mercy, yet He has favored me with His goodness, so that I cannot do otherwise than feel overwhelmed by His grace.” I do not know whether you can all say the same, but I feel persuaded that there are scores, hundreds, yea, even thousands of you who might stand up and say, “We bless God that, though unworthy of His notice, He has granted us life and grace.”

Now let us dwell for a minute or two, on the third blessing of this divine grant, “*and thy visitation hath preserved my spirit.*” There is a wonderful range of meaning in those words, but Job no doubt first refers to the providence of God by which He makes, as it were, a visitation of all the world, and especially of His own people.

As a man, who possesses a large estate, if he is wise, goes round and looks over all his cattle and his servants and his fields, and makes a visitation to see whether all is going well, for he knows that the master’s eye does much, so does God visit the earth, and inspect it, and care for the creatures whom He has formed to live upon it. “He giveth to the beast his food, and to the young ravens which cry.”

The Lord keeps a watchful eye upon the whole universe. He leads out the stars, calling them all by their names, and nightly marshals their serried ranks. He counts even the sparrows, so that not one of them falls upon the ground without His knowledge. It has been the providence of God that has preserved us hitherto, so let us bless Him for this great favor.

Some of us have had very special providential deliverances, we will not mention them tonight, because they are too many. It has been well said, “He that watches providence shall never be without a providence to watch.” I am sure it is so. You, who have had your eyes divinely opened, must have seen an act of God’s gracious providence every day. Some will only see God’s providence in deliverance from a terrible catastrophe—such as an escape from fire, or from a railway accident, or something of that unusual and startling kind, but indeed, the providence of God is watching over us just as much when we sit in our home, or sleep in our beds, or go about our daily duties.

People used to say of Dr. Gill, my illustrious predecessor, that they could easily find him, for he was always in his study, and someone remarked, “At any rate, he is in a safe place there, a man is out of harm’s way when he is studying at home.” It so happened that the Doctor was called away from his study one day, when a high wind blew down a stack of chimneys, which crashed right through the house into his study, and must have killed him if he had been in the place where he was usually sitting. Truly, it is the providence of God that preserves our lives as much when we are at home as if we were out on the vast deep when it is tossed with tempests.

Now, brethren, is it not wonderful that some of us are alive at all? Have not most of you reason to praise God for some very singular instances of his guardian care which has preserved you in being until this day? Refuse not to sing to God the song of thanksgiving which is His due. Prolonged life should beget continual gratitude, and votive offerings of joyful praise should ascend unto the Most High.

Oh, but that is only the beginning of the meaning of Job’s words, “Thy visitation hath preserved my spirit.” God has visited those of us who are His people in other ways besides the watching of His providence. Let me mention some of them.

He has visited some of us with correction, and we do not like that form of visitation. We have been smitten heavily with His rod till all our bones have ached, and the blows have been so severe that they have left black bruises, or we have lost friend after friend, or we have been corrected by the scandal and the slander of wicked men, or in some way or other God has used man as the rod in His hand to chasten us. "Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby."

Look back, and see whether you cannot say to God, "Thy visitation in correction hath preserved my spirit." Can you not say, "Before I was afflicted I went astray: but now I have kept thy word"? There have been times, in the lives of some of us, when nothing but affliction could have saved us from falling into gross sin. We should have been carried away with pride, but we suffered from grievous depression of spirit, and so could not afford to be proud. There have been times when we should have been exalted above measure, but the thorn in the flesh was graciously given to us, a messenger of Satan came to buffet us, and so we were preserved in the hour of temptation.

There are some, whom God will yet permit to be rich, who would not have been capable of managing so much money to the Lord's honor and glory if they had not for a while had to live on short commons. The very thing we regret most in providence will probably be that in which we shall rejoice most in eternity. You know, in this world, we see the wrong side of the carpet that is being woven. We are like Hannah More in the carpet factory, when she said to the workman, "I cannot see any design, there seem to be a great number of loose pieces of wool, but I cannot perceive any pattern or order." "No, madam," said the man, "of course you cannot, because you are standing on the wrong side of the carpet, if you will come to the other side, you will then see it all."

We are on the wrong side at present, but God will take us to the other side by and by, and then we shall each one say, "O my Lord, how wrongly did I judge Thee! How little did I understand Thy dealings with me! I thought Thy visitation would have crushed me, but it preserved my spirit."

There are other visitations, however, such as the visitations of consolation. Oh, how sweet those are to the soul when in trouble! You and I must have known times when our spirits have gone down below zero, when no earthly friend could comfort us, and we could not think of any source of consolation for ourselves. Just then, some unnoticed promise of the Word of God has dropped into our soul with charming effect. It was, perhaps, but a sentence of half a dozen words, but they came from God the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, and they were so powerfully applied to our spirit that we said, "I do not mind what burden I have to bear, for I know that Christ's grace will be sufficient for me. I cannot tell what the divine will may be concerning me, or however dark and dreary may be the valley of the shadow of death through which I shall have to pass, but God's rod and staff are evidently with me, and they will comfort me in the most trying hour, and my Lord Himself will surely bring me through all my tribulations."

Cannot some of you say that your blessed Savior, who has suffered for you, and who understands all your griefs, has come and bound up your broken hearts, and given you unfailing comfort when you were in such sorrow that you feared you would have lost your reason, and perhaps even taken your own life? But here you are, the living to praise Him, and to say, "Thy visitation by way of comfort has preserved my spirit."

Once more, how sweet are the visitations of God in communion! Have you not sometimes had such communion with your Lord during a sermon that you have said, "My steps had well-nigh slipped, but now my LORD has come near unto me, and he has made me to stand so firmly that nothing can cast me down"? Or perhaps you have gone upstairs to your room when you have been weighed down under very heavy grief, and you have told it all to Jesus, whispered it all into the ear that never wearies of His people's complaints, and after a while, you have come down, and you have felt, "Now I do not mind what happens, I can even face a frowning world, for Jesus Christ's visitation hath preserved my spirit."

I am also sure that many of us can say that, at the Lord's table, in the breaking of bread, our spirits have been so refreshed that we could go out into our daily callings, or back to our domestic griefs, and feel, "It really does not matter now, I can shoulder my cross, for I have seen the Crucified, I can bear my

own sorrows, for I have had fellowship with Him in His sorrows, I could even die for His sake, for I have entered into fellowship with His death.”

“Thy visitation hath preserved my spirit.” I want you, my brother, my sister, to pray for that visitation tonight. Ask the Lord Jesus not only to pay a visit to your soul, but to come and stay with you. You have only to open the door of your heart, and He will come in. That is what He said even to lukewarm Laodicea, “If any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.” So open wide the door at once.

You say, “But there is nothing within, it is only an empty house.” That does not matter to Him, for He will bring with Him the provisions on which He will sup with you and you with Him. Open the door, give Him heart room, say, “Come in, thou blessed Saviour, wherefore stand thou without?” He says to you who are slow to admit Him, “My head is filled with dew, and my locks with the drops of the night.” Oh, keep not the door of your heart closed against Him any longer! At least be willing that He should enter, pray that He may enter, cry to Him to enter, and He will surely come in to you, and you shall have such a blessed season that you shall say, “Thy visitation hath preserved my spirit.”

I have it deeply impressed upon me—so I must say it—that there are some of you who had better get a good feast tonight, for you have a great sorrow coming. You had better enter into close fellowship with Christ tonight, for the dark clouds of trouble are gathering about you. The tempest lowers, and if your ship is not prepared to weather the storm by having Christ on board, it will go ill with you.

Avail yourselves of this present opportunity of a visit from Christ. Creep to the cross, clasp it to your heart, hide yourselves there, for no lightning flash can strike you there, that cross will conduct the lightning of divine wrath right away from you, and you will be saved, and you will say afterwards, “I am glad that I stayed to the communion, and that I communed, for I did not merely eat bread and drink wine, I spiritually ate the flesh and drank the blood of my Lord, and I had fellowship with Him, and He has made me strong to suffer or to serve.” If it be so with us now, or if it has been so in the past, let us sing unto the Lord a glad song of thanksgiving for this trinity of blessing—life, favor, and preserving visitation, yea, let us sing unto Him as long as we live.

II. Very briefly must I speak upon the second part of our subject, that is, A SOLACE FOR DARK NIGHTS, “And these things hast thou hid in thine heart: I know that this is with thee.”

There is another interpretation of this verse, quite different from the one that I am going to give you, but I do not think that Job ever could have meant what some people think he did. I believe that, when he said, “These things”—that is, life, favor, and God’s gracious visitation—“These things hast thou hid in thine heart: I know that this is with thee,” that he meant, first, that *God remembers what He has done, and will not lose His pains*. “‘Thou hast granted me life and favour,’ Lord, You have not forgotten that, You have hidden that in Your heart, You remember it well. Since You have done this for me, and You do remember that You have done it, therefore You will continue Your mercy to me, and not lose all the grace and goodness which You have already bestowed upon me.”

Just think of that for a minute. Even if you have forgotten all that God has done for you, God has not forgotten it. If you do a kindness to a man, it is very probable that he will not recollect it, but you will. Many children forget all the kindness and love of their mother, but the mother remembers all that she did for her children in the days of their helplessness, and she loves them all the more because of what she did for them.

There is a little secret which I may whisper in your ear. If you want people to love you, do what you can for them, yet, possibly, you will not gain their love by that process, but if you let them do something for you, they will be sure to love you then. When you have done much for anyone, you are especially bound to that person, so Job puts it thus, “Thou, LORD, hast done much for me, thou hast all this in thine remembrance; and I am persuaded that this binds thee to me—Thy great goodness in giving me life, and favour, and in visiting me—all this has bound thee to me, and I am persuaded that thou wilt not leave me.” That is the teaching of the verse many of us delight to sing—

*“His love in time past forbids me to think
He’ll leave me at last in trouble to sink;
Each sweet Ebenezer I have in review,
Confirms His good pleasure to help me quite through.”*

If the Lord had not meant to finish His work, He would never have begun it, if He had not meant to bring us to heaven, He would not have snatched us like brands from the burning, if He had not meant to complete His work, He would not have spent so much upon us. “Spent so much upon us?” says one. Ay, He lavished upon His people more than all the millionaires who were ever upon the earth have possessed, He expended more than there is in heaven with the exception of that which He spent upon them. “What is that?” you ask. He spent the life of His only begotten Son, and heaven itself does not contain any other treasure that is at all comparable to the Father’s equal Son.

He spent the best He had upon us, and do you think that after that, He will ever leave us? No, that can never be, though He were to take away all our property, though He were to deprive us of every one of our children, though He were to cover us from head to foot with sore boils, though He should cause us to sit upon a dunghill, and scrape ourselves with a potsherd, though the very wife of our bosom should bid us curse God and die, though all our friends should become miserable comforters, and make us ready to curse the day on which we saw the light, yet still God must be gracious to us, and we must trust Him, yea, though He should slay us, yet must we trust Him. All the goodness of the past is an infallible guarantee that He will be good to us even to the end, according to that word concerning the Lord Jesus, “Having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end.” That is one meaning of the verse.

But next, I think that the words, “And these things hast thou hid in thine heart: I know that this is with thee,” have this meaning, that *God sometimes hides His favor and love in His heart, yet they are there still*. At times, it may be that you get no glimpse of His face, or that you see no smile upon it. When that is my experience, I love to turn to that verse in the sixty-third psalm: “Because thou hast been my help, therefore in the shadow of thy wings will I rejoice.”

It is all shadow, shadow, shadow, no sunshine, I cannot see my God, but the very shadow is the shadow of His wings, and as you may often see the chickens cower down beneath the mother hen, and nestle there, so in the shadow of His wings will I rejoice, and you, dear friend, may share that blessed and safe shelter. “He shalt cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust: his truth shall be thy shield and buckler.”

When there is no light, you shall walk on as steadily as if seven suns were shining. When there is no comfortable assurance for you, when there is no temporal deliverance, when there is nothing for you out of the winepress or out of the barn, when there is no friend nor helper near you, when the fig tree does not blossom, when you have no flocks, and your herds are cut off by the storm, when God’s mercy seems to be clean gone for ever, and His promises all appear to fail, it is not really so.

*“He hides the purpose of His grace
To make it better known.”*

The Lord is gracious, and full of compassion, therefore, O tried child of God, learn what Job here teaches us, that these things are still hidden in the heart of God, and that eternal love holds fast to the objects of its choice.

“I know that this is with thee,” said Job, so the last thing I want you to learn from his words is that *God would have His people strong in faith to know this truth*. Job says, “I know that this is with thee.” I speak to many persons who say that they are Christians, and who perhaps are believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, and one of their clearest evidences is that they are very happy.

Dear young people, I am glad you are so happy. True religion makes people happy, it is a perennial fountain of delight. But do not set too much store by your emotions of delight, because they may be

taken from you, and then where will your evidences be? God's people sometimes walk in darkness, and see no light. There are times when the best and brightest of saints have no joy. I will not say whether they are not to be blamed for that, it is probable that they are in most instances, though I do not see that Job could be much blamed, I wish I were able to be a thousandth part as good as he was with a thousandth part of his pains and troubles. But it is a fact that, whether rightly or wrongly, God's people are not always joyous, as Peter says, "For a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations."

Whenever you get into that condition, dear young people, if you have learned to trust Christ before, trust Him still. If your religion should not, for a time, yield you any joy, cling to it all the same. Do not give it up, for if there is any time when you need faith, it is when your spirits sink, and when your outward trials multiply.

You see, God does not give you faith in order that you may merely run about in the meadows with it all among the fair spring flowers. I will tell you for what purpose He gives you faith, it is that you may put on your snowshoes, and go out in the cold wintry blast, and glide along over the ice and the snow. He does not give you faith that you may put it on as I remember seeing Napoleon's guard with armor in which I saw my face as well as ever I did in a mirror, the Lord does not give you faith merely that you may go on parade with it and show yourself, you are to fight with it.

There is not a fragment of faith that you have which will not be dented by the blows of the enemy, and rusted through exposure to the weather. You will have difficulties, mark you, as surely as you have faith. You will have a difficulty in maintaining your faith against the assaults of the adversary, for wherever there is faith in the world, there are trials for it to encounter.

Railway men do not build bridges over rivers without an intention of sending engines and trains across them, and God does not give faith without an intention of letting it be tried, and He wants you to know, when He does try you, or permit others to try you, that He still loves you. When He leaves you for a little while in the dark, He loves you just as much as when you were in the light.

A little child cries, and says that her mother does not love her because she has put her to bed, and gone downstairs, and left her in the dark. She will always be a baby if the mother stays there with a candle by the hour together till she gets to sleep. The mother wants her child to grow into a woman, and she trains her accordingly. So is it with us. God does often humor our littleness and weakness by doing many kind things to us as we do to poor feeble little children, but He wants us to grow up, and become men and women in Christ Jesus, and to be strong in the Lord.

I pray that you, my dear brethren and sisters, may be stalwart Christians of this sort. You see, if our faith is to depend upon our disposition, our joy or our sorrow, it will be always fluctuating, up and down, and we shall be apt to think that we may be saved today and lost tomorrow. That is not the teaching of the Bible. When you are on the mountain with Christ, you are safe, but when you are at the bottom of the valley with Christ, you are just as safe; when you sit at the table with Christ, you are safe; and so you are if you should be at sea with Christ in the vessel. Only have faith in Him and say, "My God, Thy will towards me to give me life, and favor, and preservation, may be hidden, but it is still in Thine heart, 'I know that this is with thee.'"

Now I must leave these things with you. You who know and love the Lord will seek a renewal of His visitations tonight, and as for you who do not know Him, oh, how I wish that you did! Often as I come on this platform, and look upon this throng of people, I should wonder why so many came if I did not know that the earnest simple preaching of the Gospel will never fail to bring people together. But as you have come to hear the Gospel, I pray you also to receive it. Do not merely hear it, but accept it.

If there were diamonds to be given away here, and I said that I would give them to everybody who was willing to have them, I am sure that you would not be content to hear me talking about their beauty, their facets, or their particular brilliance, but you would each one cry out, "Hand me one." "Give me one." "Pass me down one worth a hundred thousand pounds, I will be content with that, and you may leave off talking if you like." I will leave off talking about Christ if you will take Him as your Savior. I

shall not need to extol Him when you have once accepted Him, for you will find out His excellence for yourselves. The Scripture saith, "Taste and see that the LORD is good." Oh, that you would all taste and see for yourselves! You would know His goodness far better from that taste and sight than you can ever know it from any human language however earnest it may be. God bless you all, for Christ's sake! Amen.

Taken from The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit C. H. Spurgeon Collection. Only necessary changes have been made, such as correcting spelling errors, some punctuation usage, capitalization of deity pronouns, and minimal updating of a few archaic words. The content is unabridged. Additional Bible-based resources are available at www.spurgeongems.org.